1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

Though the horse was not a primary source of food, stories and case histories reveal that horse meat was eaten on occasion and relished. In food-getting Comanche culture was basically a buffalo culture. [262]

As a beast of burden and as a means of personal transportation the horse had a fundamental value to the Comanche. In this respect the horse was a [492] capital good. But the single individual could not effectively utilize more than a dozen horses in his personal string for use in war and hunting.

Beyond this, horses were exceedingly acceptable as gifts and tokens of 431 esteem. As gifts given in reciprocity for services rendered and as fees to 422 medicine men, they served as an informal medium of exchange. As objects demandable in settlement of damage suits at law, they were a tangible form of material wealth endowed with legal and monetary significance.

In spite of all this, the great value of horses to the Comanche was a [554] fiduciary value of inflated worth as prestige tokens, a value rooted in socio-psychological rather than economic factors.

Though captured Mexican youths and children purchased from poverty- 233 stricken Shoshone Indians served as herdsmen, and the increase of herds 556 through selective breeding was practiced by the Comanches, the basic fac- [567] tor in the acquisition and retaining of a large herd was the military skill of the owners. Thus it is that the possession of horses figured in the prestige competition which so constantly and vigorously activated the life of the Comanche male.

The size of Comanche herds was immense. Probably no Indians were more richly supplied than they. Upon the count of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Antelope band alone surrendered one thousand five hundred horses to the United States at the time of the capitulation at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, on June 2, 1875.[17] A single Comanche, Big Fall By Tripping, is reputed among the Indians to have owned more than a thousand horses at one time.

The great communal hunts of the buffalo occurred during the summer 224 months after the seasonal moulting was done and hides were in their prime. This was the season for the in-gathering of the bands. Sporadic and uncontrolled hunting of buffalo occurred whenever they were available during other seasons.

The time of the hunt was determined in democratic assembly at which everybody was welcome to listen, but in which the war leaders took the important part. The date for departure being set, the young and able-bodied men with their women left the main camp. Children and old persons remained behind. The expedition travelled light, taking very small and undecorated tipis and what weapons and tools were necessary.

[17] Commissioner of Indian Affairs (Annual Report, Washington, 1875), p. 273.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

624 554 brave man who was not necessarily a war chief. It, too, was decorated with a row of eagle feathers. These had the breast feathers tied about the bottom of the quill and reached down to the waist of the wearer. At the top of the buffalo scalp was a bunch of magpie feathers set back on the center of the head.

554 431 In the Buffalo Eaters band such a bonnet was assumed by any brave who felt worthy of wearing one. There was definitely no ceremonial bestowal. Becomes A Middle-Aged Man, who possessed such a bonnet, says that sometimes it was the gift of friends to a brave man. One friend might suggest it to another with the result that they would gather up the feathers. A woman made them into a scalp bonnet, after which it was presented by them to the mutual friend as a token of esteem.

554 The acceptance of a buffalo scalp bonnet was a serious matter. People watched a man who took one to see if he was really worthy in his next battles. Failure meant ridicule and disgrace. Becomes A Middle-Aged Man could have risen to the rank of tɛ́kniwap. He did not, because he felt that he was not brave enough. And yet this man is one (the sole survivor) of the band of six who entered the fortified corral at Fort Sill sixty-nine years ago to drive out one hundred and twenty-one horses under the very noses of the guards without being detected! When the final capitulation to the whites was made, he hung his buffalo scalp bonnet in a tree, leaving it there never again to be worn. In his words, "A man who has surrendered his freedon is not fit to wear such an honorable badge." In the old days, it was the practice upon the death of a chief to hang his bonnet in a tree where it could not be seen; so to allow it to waste away.

626 Women among the Comanches were also privileged to bestow war bonnets upon "deserving" fighters. But it was a hat which rested uncomfortably upon the head of the receiver. Braggarts, whose words spoke louder than their deeds, were neatly handled by the plotting, sniggering females. They made him a war bonnet in secret (if we only knew what kind!). When the moment was ripe, they made a public presentation with such words as these. "Here, you're such a brave fellow. You ought to be a tɛ́kniwap. Surely, anyone as brave as you ought to be without fear in the face of the enemy. Yes, you deserve a war bonnet. Now it is yours to wear."

So what was Talking Bigger Than His Deeds to do? He had to live up to the obligations of that war hat, or lose it and become an "elder sister." There was a sanction!

554 701 A most special type of war bonnet was the Crow Feather Tassel (haimudya).[11] The Crow Feather Tassel was made of five feathers clipped short

[11] The details of the haimudya complex are from information obtained by Dr. Mirsky.

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

culiar doctrines among the heathen. Accordingly, I received 727
it at their hands in an attitude of great humility, and gazed upon it with that air of reverence which may be supposed characterizes the Hindoo kneeling before the graven image of a monkey, wound it up, held it to my ear, listened to the tick, tick, tick, with a solemnity of expression intended to convey the same idea, as if I had said to them in their own language: "Gentlemen Indians, I am now receiving important telegraphic dispatches from the other side of Jordan!" Presently, it sounded the alarm. It would have been a curious and interesting picture for an artist, could he have watched the various expressions of astonishment, awe, and wonder that overspread their features during the whir and whirl and whiz of the cunning mechanism. Ejaculating their impressive "ugh, ugh," they looked seriously and inquiringly into each other's faces, as much as to say—"Well, I never; did you ever!"

Finally, the watch was taken by the old chief and for- [431]
mally presented to the squaw, whom I afterwards learned was his favorite wife. The presentation speech I was unable to understand, but surmised it was very similar to those which usually accompanies the presentation of flags in more civilized communities, that is to say, an exhortation to the recipient to stand by it until the last drop of blood has been spilled, and to preserve it, under any circumstances, "sacred and inviolate." This ceremony over, I was con- [262]
ducted to the chief's tent, regaled with a late dinner, horse-flesh being the only dish mentioned on the bill of fare, and this without the useless luxuries of salt and pepper, and *very* rare, when I was seated at the entrance, and had a brief opportunity of taking a view of the town.

This Indian village, in every material respect, was like 361
other Comanche villages with which I afterwards became

The Comanches

177 231 He could run down and kill the buffalo on the open plains and afterwards carry it farther and save more of it than had been possible before.

It is difficult to overestimate the military value of the horse to the Comanche. It provided both the means and the incentive for more extended raids. Forays could be made more often and deeper into enemy territory, and the possibility of escaping safely with more plunder was greater with its use. It was primarily the horse that enabled the Comanches to extend their power southward, to beat the Spaniards and the Mexicans for more than a century, to make the Texas frontier unsafe for white settlement until they were restricted to a reservation, and to contend for a time successfully with the military forces of the United States from the Mexican border to north of the Arkansas River.

556 ● 431 436 Horses constituted the most important type of property and the staple form of wealth. Because taking them under difficult conditions had a sociopsychological value, the acquisition of a large herd added greatly to the prestige of the owner. The owner of a large herd could make more munificent gifts to a prospective wife and members of her family and to other members of the tribe. Horses served also as an informal medium of exchange. They could be presented as gifts in reciprocity for services rendered and as fees to medicine men. When they were used in the settlement of controversies between individuals—as they generally were among the Comanches—they had legal as well as monetary significance.

231 Comanche esteem of horses knew no bounds. Each man had at least one favorite horse, although his personal string might run to dozens, or even hundreds, of animals. His favorite horse was kept picketed close to his tipi at night while the remuda grazed on the open plains. He tended it, petted it, and adored it. "Some men loved their horses more than they loved their wives," said Post Oak Jim. To this, others added, "Or child, or any other any human being." And in seeking legal settlements, whatever else the prosecuting man and his friends might demand of the offending culprit, they were sure to insist on the favorite horse.

231 681

In his own experience with a damage suit, Breaks Something had to deal with this problem.

The Comanches

231 not ride a single one, but had to travel sitting on a travois. In com-
174 parison, the entire Pawnee tribe had 1,400, the Osage 1,200, and the
556 Omaha 1,200. The greater the distance from Texas and Mexico, the fewer the horses found.

231 The number of horses possessed by the South Plains Indians decreased rapidly in the last half of the nineteenth century. The Antelope band surrendered only 1,500 head to the United States at the time of their capitulation at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, on June 2, 1875.[11] The Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, and Delaware tribes had 14,810 head in 1874, but three years later they possessed only 4,194. Subsequent to just one engagement, on the morning of September 28, 1874, the day after he had destroyed the Comanche-Kiowa-Cheyenne camp in Palo Duro Canyon, Colonel MacKenzie's troop shot and killed some 1,400 Indian horses.[12] Such attrition devastated the great herds.

The Comanches obtained their supply of horses by gift and trade, by breeding, by capturing wild ones, and by raiding.

• 431 It was considered a gracious gesture to give a favorite horse to a friend. And although it was general practice to kill a warrior's per-
[764 sonal riding string on his grave, many a man before his death willed
428] his favorite horse to his best friend. Even the poorest had at least one horse, for the public approved the rich man who celebrated an important occasion by giving a horse to some poor old fellow who could not rustle one for himself.

728 In intertribal trading the Comanches exchanged horses for goods,
[439] but by 1850 they had so many horses themselves that they never bothered to trade for them. In the great peace-making in 1840 between the Cheyennes on the one side and the Comanches, Kiowas, and Kiowa-Apaches on the other, the Cheyennes gave guns, blankets, calico, beads, and brass kettles, while the Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches offered horses. Mountain, the Kiowa spokesman, had said, "We all of us have many horses; as many as we need; we do not wish to accept any horses as presents, but we shall be glad to accept any other gifts. We, the Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches, have made a road to give many horses to you when we come here." They were as good as his word; every Cheyenne man, woman, and child

[11] Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1875, 273.
[12] Nye, *Carbine and Lance*, 223.

the several Comanche bands which resided on the 175 648 728
the eastern limits of New Mexico.

Anza was aided in his task by the immense prestige he enjoyed among the Indians. His reputation he owed to the destruction of a large Comanche camp in southeastern Colorado in 1779 and to the slaying at the same time of the prominent war chief Cuerno Verde. Governor Anza, in fact, succeeded in establishing peace with the Comanches by February of 1786 and at the same time in enlisting their aid in the continuing struggle with hostile Apaches in the south.

At the peace gathering were represented the principal bands of the Western Comanches, including the Yamparikas, and Yupes or Jupes, who were probably identical with the group known later as the Kwaharis. Some members of another band, the Kotsotekas, often called Cuchanticas or Cuchanecs, were also present. The Spaniards themselves during the last quarter of the eighteenth century were uncertain as to the divisions within the tribe. For example, the authorities in Texas usually considered the Kotsotekas as Eastern Comanches (*Orientales*) along with the Penatekas or Honey-Eaters (known to the Anglo-Americans later as the Wasp Band).

175 648 728 101 175 101

The Western Comanches, who agreed to terminate hostilities against the Spanish, followed a suggestion of Governor Anza and selected one of their number, Ecueracapa or Leather Jacket, to serve as head chief with authority to speak for the tribe. To increase his stature, the Spaniards bestowed upon Ecueracapa the lofty title of "General of the Comanche Nation." As a further inducement to remain at peace,

175 728 648 [643] [431]

13: Simmons H-4 (no date) 1967 NO6 Comanche NO6
(1785-1819) New Mexico

Document Six

REPORT ON COMANCHE AFFAIRS BY THE Governor of New Mexico, Joaquin Real Alencaster, Santa Fe, November 20, 1805, to the Commandant General of the Interior Provinces.

I AM NOTIFYING Your Excellency that three captains of the Yamparika Comanches who formerly lived to the north but now are found along the Rio Colorado [Canadian River], have presented themselves before me, requesting four favors, the nature of which are here explained; First that I should name as generals one of their captains called Somiquaso, and another from among the Cuchanticas called Quegue so that they would have leaders.

Second, that I should clothe them and present them gifts;

Third, that citizens from this Province should go and build them houses of wood forming a plaza along the aforementioned Rio Colorado near that of the Conchas. They agree to maintain the laborers and repay them with goods for their work;

And fourth, that I should set free certain prisoners and criminals.

I agreed to appoint the general whom they had requested and he took the name Carlos. I gave them

175
648 clothes and gifts and offered to send workers to con-
[431] struct their houses if they would return for them in the spring. I denied them their fourth request.

175 Also, they asked that some should come at the first
648 of next [year] to barter for the small number of hides
439 which they had. In so far as it shall be convenient I offered to let a few [people] go and carry on trade.
[643] On giving the staff of office (*bastón*) to the [Comanche] general, I had him give his word that they would come every year to trade and I promised him justice in the exchange of [their] goods for [those of our] goods which were desired, saying that this was
175 a good way to avoid unpleasantness. With all of this
648 they went away quite content, including the women and others who had accompanied them.

These Comanches were commanded for a long time by an Indian who was very loyal to this Province and who was known as Malla (Iron Jacket). All of the above I call to the attention of Your Excellency, hoping that it merits your approval.

May God keep you. Santa Fe, 20 of November of 1805.

J. R. A. [to the] Commandant General of the Internal Provinces

20: Wallace H-4,5 (1945) 1953 NO6 Comanche NO6

657 178 177 make the cultural transition they have been called upon to accomplish. As a result of its work, many tribal superstitutions are being discarded for modern scientific concepts. [757] [756] Although hardly a Comanche would accept a white physician at the beginning of the reservation period, the Indian practitioner today is almost a forgotten man.

186 178 177 182 The Comanches are still confronted with many sociological and psychological problems of adjustment. They have not entirely disintegrated, nor have they been completely assimilated. They are still Indian and want to follow the Indian pattern; their environment, experience, and teaching encourages them to discard it. They are intensely proud of being Comanche, and cherish their cultural heritage. They feel that they were unjustly robbed of their homeland, but know that they must make the best of their situation. The conflict between the old and the new often prevents the acceptance of any regular pattern of conduct and leads to confusion or unusual situations.

[291] [302] 431 [454] The matter of custom is vital to the Comanches. It is difficult to discard tradition. Some old women still wear their blankets, and a few old men continue to paint their faces and to wear their hair in plaits. The tradition of generosity does not fit well in American society for it is an impediment to economic security. Their idea of a pleasant life does not include saving, because saving had no place in their primitive society. The give-away dance has not entirely disappeared, and those who give are the losers and afterwards may seek the aid of the government.

157 181 [178] There still exists a strong incentive toward the glorification of the individual. This character trait was a regular feature of the old social system, where the aim of the warrior was to gain glory and where there was constant acknowledgment of his achievements. It led to an immense [152] sensitiveness to praise and censure. The Comanches, as a result, require more praise than the white man to function, 157 181 701 and they suffer more than the white man from censure. The attitude was readily apparent in 1945. More than two hun-

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

A doctor should never suggest that he could cure an individual but must wait for the individual to approach him. Again Sanapia states that a violation of this norm would be an indication on the part of the doctor that he, and only secondarily his Medicine, is the important element in the potential curing. 115 159 756

A doctor must be paid for any services he renders, no matter how slight. Similarly, a doctor cannot work his Medicine without payment. In the case of an eagle doctor, this applies even to family members. In addition, the payment, with the exception of certain relatively inexpensive ritual items (green cloth and tobacco) required at the first interview of doctor and patient, must be left to the discretion of the patient. A doctor cannot refuse anything which is offered in payment. Furthermore, Sanapia was instructed that she must immediately give away a portion of her final payment to anyone in her immediate vicinity at the time of payment. This "give away" is a means by which Sanapia honors her Medicine. 115 159 756 465 [431]

> And one thing, when they come to me . . . anybody comes to me and say, "I want you to doctor me," bring plain goods, no figure or nothing. Dark green goods. They have to take that and smoke and they going to give me that green goods. Either a yard or two or three or four yards like that. That's the only thing I ask for. And they say, "Now what else we going to pay you when you get this boy, this girl, this woman, this man well?" I say, "That's what I call for . . . just the green goods. And if he gets well or she gets well, its up to you. If you think I get that person well, its up to you." But I'm not going to say I want this and that and that and I want so much money. I'm not going to say that because that's what my mother told me. She said, "Don't you ever ask for anything. Its going to be given to you. I don't care what anybody says, its going to come to you." Now, up to today, when anybody give to me . . . give me blanket or any kind of goods . . . I ain't supposed to keep it. It be like somebody come here and I doctor them and they get well and they come in and pile things up here for me and those girls are out there. I call them and say, "Here, you all. Take you choice out of this." And whatever they leave, that's mine. And that's the way I get all my things today and that was my mother's words . . . what she told me to do.

Origin of Eagle Doctors

It was also during this period of training that Sanapia was told the origin story of the Comanche eagle doctors.

> Way back in years there used to be an old woman who was pretty poor. She had a grandson she tried her best to take care of because all her children were gone and all that was left was this grandson. When them people moved their camps, she used to trail behind them. When they set up another camp, the old woman would camp right outside on the edge of that camp place. Sometimes people, mens, brought them food, meat, you know. But most times they were poor and hungry. And it went on and went on till one time they were all down south and west among them Navajo and Pueblo peoples. They was all trading each other. Meat and blankets for corn and meal and things. One Comanche young man got a whole pile of that corn meal and brought it to the old woman. That's the only way they could get that stuff them days. The grandson was happy over that, you know, over that young man bringing those things and helping 756 773

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

to which her mother had sent her, and at dusk she would creep back to her house and pass the night under the front porch. In the morning she would go back to the hill before the household had awakened. Her mother and uncle never knew about this deception. However, Sanapia believes that the great amount of sickness and misfortune experienced as a young woman can be attributed to her cowardly conduct during this last phase of her training.

> Before, you have to go and fast four days, before they give you that Medicine. Maybe take a little water. You suppose to go up there on that hill and sleep up there by yourself. You suppose to pray and cry and talk. My mother say, "Somebody will come to you way in the night . . . in the middle of the night. They going to push you and kick you and they do things like that, but don't get scared. They going to kick you around and slap you. They fighting you for your Medicine." That's what they told me. But me, I was afraid to sleep up there in them mountains by myself. I didn't want to go out. I go up there and come back. Nobody come to me . . . or nothing.

Before appearing at her home on the morning of the fifth day, Sanapia bathed in a running stream as a device to erase any vestiges of supernatural residue which could be harmful to those who would greet her on her return. The mother met Sanapia as she approached the house and blessed her with the standard cedaring, fanning, and application of red paint. It was also during this blessing that the mother first addressed her daughter as *puhakut*.

Close friends of Sanapia's family had gathered at the house to congratulate Sanapia and to present her with gifts. The host family in turn gave gifts to those who came to honor Sanapia. Moccasins, blankets, shawls, groceries, money, dishes, yard goods, and horses were the items which were exchanged as gifts.

Within a few days after Sanapia returned from her four-day fasting, her family sponsored a peyote meeting. The main function of this particular meeting was to gather a large group of Comanches for the purpose of formally announcing Sanapia's newly acquired status. Also, it was thought that the prayers which would be offered for her during the meeting would aid her to more easily bear the burdens which her power imposed. The morning after the meeting was festive, consisting of more gift giving and feasting. However, at the same time that the beginning of Sanapia's new career was being celebrated, her mother's doctoring career had ended. The mother, though retaining all her powers, would cease to function as a doctor. Her withdrawal, however, was voluntary. If she had so desired, she could have continued her doctoring activities. This type of behavior would have been considered improper on the part of the mother, even though Sanapia would not be able to doctor until many years in the future, after menopause. Sanapia, basing her actions on those of her mother, will also cease doctoring once she has transmitted her skills and powers to her successor. In the nomadic Comanche culture, power could be transmitted from donor to recipient with no loss on the part of the donor. This is the case with the transmission of power from the mother to Sanapia.

In Sanapia's accounts of her mother's temper during the time of transmission of power, it would seem that the mother, who had reached a very advanced

178 this Comanche case resemble, however, the geometric painted designs of the Cheyenne more closely than those of the Upper Missouri tribes.[13]

Comanche Beaded Pouch Plate 19

Berlandier termed a beaded pouch of unusual shape in his collection a Comanche "game bag." It appears as Plate 19A. William Bollaert, however, pictured a pouch of nearly identical size and shape among the articles taken from the Comanche who attacked Corpus Christi in June 1844. (See Figure 18, upper left.)B Perhaps this pouch served for holding medicines or valuable war equipment. The soft skin pouch is 29 cm. wide at the top, and each of the two finger-like projections provides a pocket 25 cm. deep. A series of buckskin tiestrings serves both to hold together the front and back pieces of skin forming the pouch and to provide a decorative fringe. Virtually the entire front of the case is decorated with beadwork in the large or "pony bead" size. The border and two equal-armed crosses are in white, the background in blue beads. The edge of the top flap is decorated with fringe. The beads on this flap are applied in the lazy stitch in three bands: the lower and upper bands are of white and blue "pony beads" while the center band is of the much smaller "seed beads" in white and red.

We know that Spanish officials presented beads to the Indians of Texas during the 18th century and that Dr. Sibley reported Comanche fondness for blue beads in 1807, but this may be one of the earliest examples of Comanche beadwork that has been preserved.[14]

Feathered Headdress Figure 29

A very handsome headdress of a Comanche man is pictured in Figure 29. In form and construction it differs markedly from the more familiar feathered bonnet with beaded browband worn by the Comanche and Indians of many other tribes on dress occasions within the Reservation Period—the headdress that has become the widely recognized symbol of the North American Indian.

This headdress has two major parts, a cap and a trailer of feathers. The cap is fashioned of two pieces of soft-dressed skin of equal size, one forming each side, sewn together with sinew along the vertical midline of the back. It is made to cover the sides, back, and top of the wearer's head but does not extend as far forward as his brow. The lower borders extend to points at the front of each side. The upper part of the cap is covered with red trade cloth, and this, in turn, is decorated with a band of beadwork passing over the top

13. Wissler (1910, pp. 77–78) pictures a side-fringed rawhide case from the Blackfoot and mentions similar cases from the Sarsi, Gros Ventres, Arapaho, and tribes of the Northwestern Plateau in the collections of the American Museum of Natural History.

14. On May 20, 1770, De Mézières requested "two arrobas of beads, white, blue and red" for presents to the chiefs of the Comanche and neighboring tribes, and in 1779 listed 54 pounds of glass beads received for the same purpose. (Boston, 1914, vol. 2, pp. 201–02, 244.) Dr. Sibley found that the Comanche in 1807 were indifferent to many articles of trade desired by other tribes: "Blue & Red Stroud, Vermilion, Blankets, Blue Beads & knives, are almost the only Articles they Seem Anxious to obtain." (Sibley, 1922, p. 81.)

A [See p. 180-C--Analyst.]
B [See p. 169--Analyst.]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 180]